NAQCC News

March 13, 2010	NAQCC Web Site	Issue #114

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1. MARCH SPRINT: Our regular monthly sprint is this Thursday, March 18th at 0030-0230Z.

We hope to continue our record breaking performances of the past couple sprints. With daylight savings time now in effect, 20 meters should be available for QSO's again. There have been only a couple 20M QSO's in the past few sprints now. We are also expanding our frequency range on 40M to 7030-7045 kHz because of our greatly increased participation in these sprints. That should help as 40 gets better and better with the later sunsets now and increased sunspot activity.

Remember our special First-Timer certificate that goes to the highest scoring participant who never before submitted a log for one of our sprints. Also the prize of custom made bug/paddle handles or straight key knobs that goes to the one chosen in a random drawing among ALL participants who submit a log regardless of score. K3RLL was the delighted winner of the first such drawing last month. See his comments in an iterm further on in the newsletter. This prize giveaway will continue for the next 9 months now.

If you are entering one of our sprints for the first time, we welcome you and hope you will be a regular participant from now on. Last month we welcomed KO7X (non-member), WA1BXY, N8RQJ, W5ODS, KC8LTL, N0AZN, WW5G, KE7YTE, K0NWT, VE3AKV as first time log submitters.

Remember this is only a very brief overview of the coming sprints. Be sure to read and understand the full general sprint rules and any specific rules for this month's sprints here.

2. FEBRUARY CHALLENGE RESULTS: Groundhog 'hunting' proved quite popular in February especially after the little creatures came up with some of those lousy forecasts that unfortunately for a large part of the USA did come true this year.

Making this an easier challenge this year seemingly encouraged more people to try their hand at it.

These folks mastered the challenge and will receive a certificate:

WB2YAF, N1LU, K9OSC, W2JEK, K1IEE, N8XMS, K3WWP, KH6OZ, KQ1P, WA7HDI, NU7T, WY3H.

K3WWP and NU7T did it using only calls from DX stations.

As always, full challenge info and results can be found here.

3. GENERAL CLUB NEWS: - We've not gotten a lot of response to our items about local chapters for the club nor for our banner design contest.

We want to hear your thoughts on local chapters. Briefly a local chapter would give an opportunity for members in a local area (city, county, state, or just about any geographical area) a chance to get to know each other a little better and to gather together personally for activities relating to CW and QRP. Chapters would be very informal and free-form with chapter members having control over the chapter activities.

We have had a few submissions in our banner design contest, and soon we'll decide on a winner. If you want more info on the contest, email us and ask. We're sure there are at least several good computer graphics artists among our members who could come up with a really neat banner.

- Everyone who pays the slightest attention to what the NAQCC is doing, knows we have a lot of prizes being donated by members and groups to be given away. One very generous donor is Gregg WB8LZG who is a master wood craftsman. He crafts beautiful paddle handles, bug handles, and straight key knobs to mention a few items.

It's very easy to win some of the items he has donated. All you need do is participate in our events and be a little lucky. One example of what you must do is simply to enter our sprints and submit a log. Everyone who does so becomes eligible for a drawing to win the item. Last month, all 75 members who submitted a log had their overall finishing position from 1 to 76 (we had one non-member who was not eligible) selected at random in an Excel spreadsheet. The winning number was 66, and it was Don K3RLL (ex-WA3ZBJ) who finished 66th, thus he was the winner.

Now after that (overly?) long explanation, here is what Don had to say upon receiving the paddle handles,
"Michael (Prize Manager KC2EGL), John (K3WWP) & Greg (WB8LZG),
Just a quick note of thanks for the excellent new WB8LZG wooden keyer paddles (handles) for my old Bencher keyer paddles. They arrived yesterday and it took a day of admiring them before getting up the nerve to install them. The results are shown in the attached photo (below). They have a very good feel to them and will surely improve my spelling on CW. I also think they go very well with, and nicely augment, the wooden paddle cover on the Bencher.

Greg really does beautiful work and it was very generous of him to donate these prizes to the NAQCC. Thank you very much. I am delighted with my "participation prize", and very pleased that the club policy provides at least some prizes based upon goals within my capabilities (participation, that is). HI
Thanks again, ... 72/73,
Don K3RLL/4
NAQCC #1905 FC7

- Speaking of prizes, we have a new donation to our prize chest. It is the winner's choice of a 20M, 40M, or 80M dipole antenna courtesy of John KO0KY. The winner will be chosen in a random drawing from a pool of those 7 members who have already won our Friendship Club award plus those who earn the award between now and June 30, 2010.

For more details of this and all our other prizes, see here.

- It gives us great pleasure to announce the winner of the anonymously donated Vibroplex bug. Paul N8XMS earned 18 points over the period of Oct 2009 through Feb 2010 as described on the prize page. Congratulations Paul.

- One thing that continually puzzles me about the club is the lack of interest in earning our award for working other club members. Our award is unique among such awards in other clubs in that it assigns points to different types of QSO's. It should appeal to rag-chewers as a good rag chew in which 'other' info is learned about the person worked counts as 4 points. That means info beyond the usual RST-QTH-Name-Rig-WX found in just about every QSO. It appeals to contesters as each contest QSO with a member is worth 2 points. We even allow for QSO's with a a person before they became a member which is a 1 point QSO as is a QSO with a member that doesn't fit the rag-chew or contest criteria. Personally I'm totally in love with this format because it goes well beyond just saying my NAQCC number is 2, tnx for the QSO, 73.

Because of the aspect of getting to know the ham you work better and become friends, we've re-christened it the Friendship Club Award. Those who earn it get to now include an FC number along with their membership number. Check it out in the Awards section of the web site, then check out your logs. With the prolific activity from club members, you probably already have qualified for the award. I recently qualified for a 1400 point endorsement for QSO's with 660 different members, so it is very easy to get the basic 200 points for the award which is pictured here.

Friendship
Club Award
SAMPLE
NAQCC
NORTH AMERICAN QRP CW CLUB
has made friends with enough club members to earn 200 pts. according to the FC QSO pts. schedule, and is now authorized to give out the FC Nr. below in his/her QSO's.
SAMPLE
FC Nr_____ Date _____
signed John, K3WWP
Awards Chairman

- Don't forget our hidden call sign in the newsletter. We learned just after publication of our last issue that the selected member (KI4PB) had recently become a silent key. So this issue there are two hidden calls to make up for that misfortune.

Those who read the newsletter regularly know all about the hidden call feature, and are just searching and waiting for their call to show up somewhere. So we're not going to say much more about it other than a short announcement each issue from now on. The hidden call sign will be composed of upper and lower case letters and be in an obviously out of context place. If it's yours and you let us know via **NAQCC33@WINDSTREAM.NET** before the publication date (March 27) of the next newsletter, you win 100 NAQCC QSL's. If it's not yours, you get the satisfaction of finding it, nothing more.

- Dennis Cornell N7HRO #2181 sent this along on February 28:
"Hi fellow NAQCC and FISTS Members,
I am writing to pass on a phone number for Roy, W5RJ who is in a care facility for an infection in his big toe. For most this would not be a problem but for Roy who is a diabetic, over 70 and a little overweight it is a problem. Roy used to be one of the list managers (newsletter emailer) for NAQCC and is a long time member of FISTS. [NAQCC 0210, FISTS 3137] The latest number his wife gave me is 660-679-9042. I am sure he would like a phone call from his friends around the world. You can also email him at w5rj@embarqmail.com. I believe his wife has set up his laptop at the facility but if not she can copy his emails and take them to him. He is good on QRZ.COM and a card to that address would work also. Thanks for thinking about my friend, Roy Jones, W5RJ.
Dennis Cornell
Wheatland, Wyoming"

Roy did an excellent job of handling our newsletter emailings before he had to give it up because of declining health. All of us at NAQCC wish him a speedy recovery

3a. WEB SITE TOUR: - Let's look at two sections of the web site in this issue since the one is so brief.

Become A Member simply takes you to a link to the membership application. Since you are already a member, this won't interest you other than to tell anyone you recruit where to go to sign up.

Challenges describes one of the most interesting and unique aspects of the club. Each month we 'challenge' you to accomplish something involving ham radio using CW and QRP. Perhaps our most generally popular type of challenge is making words using letters in the call signs of stations we work. Lists of words may include words relating to Thanksgiving in November or Presidents in February to mention but two examples.

In this section you'll find a list of links to past, present, and upcoming challenges.

There is also a page with a tutorial on our alphabet type challenges for those who may be a bit confused about the subject or who want an easy way to track progress in an alphabet challenge.

A General Rules page lists rules that are common to all the challenges.

Finally there is a page for each of the past challenges via a Results link.

4. FEATURED AWARD OF THE MONTH: - As mentioned above, our Advanced Worked Members Award has gotten a brand new name - Friendship Club Award. You get the award when you earn 200 points in the following manner. Each QSO with a member is worth points as follows.

1 point for a QSO with a member before they joined the club.
1 point also for a QSO that does not go beyond the standard RST QTH Name Rig WX common type of QSO.

2 points for a contest or sprint QSO since contesting is an excellent way to hone CW skills.

Now here's the kicker why we call it the Friendship Club Award. You get 4 points for a QSO when you become friends with a member. How? By having a QSO where you find out about his job, hobbies, family, etc. That is, if you find out he served on a destroyer in WW II, works in the post office, breeds dogs, collects stamps, loves walking, and so on. The list is endless and anything like that makes it a 4 point QSO.

5 points for any type of QSO with our club station N3AQC or with the previous call of KB3MQT or any of our N#A calls. The 5 points can be claimed only once since all club calls carry the club number 1100, and a club number determines what is a different member.

When you accumulate 200 points, you get a FC number, a certificate, and a web 'honor roll' listing. The web listing can be updated each time you add 100 points to your total. Those who already earned our Advanced Worked Members Award are automatically grandfathered into the Friendship Club. Here's a list of those members and their numbers and current points level.

Each has been issued a new certificate as shown above.

K3WWP #0001 - 1400
KI4DEF #0002 - 300
KD2MX #0003 - 200
NU7T #0004 - 400
K4PBY #0005 - 200
VE3HUR #0006 - 200
K3RLL #0007 - 200

We suggest that you get into the habit of giving out your NAQCC membership number in your QSO's. Then if the person you work is also a member you can continue to rag chew and make it a 4 point QSO. If they are not a member, we still want you to continue to rag chew and tell them about the club. Then if they later do become a member, that makes the QSO a pre-membership 1 point QSO. We do not encourage simply exchanging numbers and then going QRT. Number exchanging is not the bottom line with this award. Making friends is.

You can also earn a Friendship Club Award and FC number by simply contacting 200 different members and counting each as one point regardless of what type of QSO it is. The choice is yours.

Full NAQCC Awards info here.

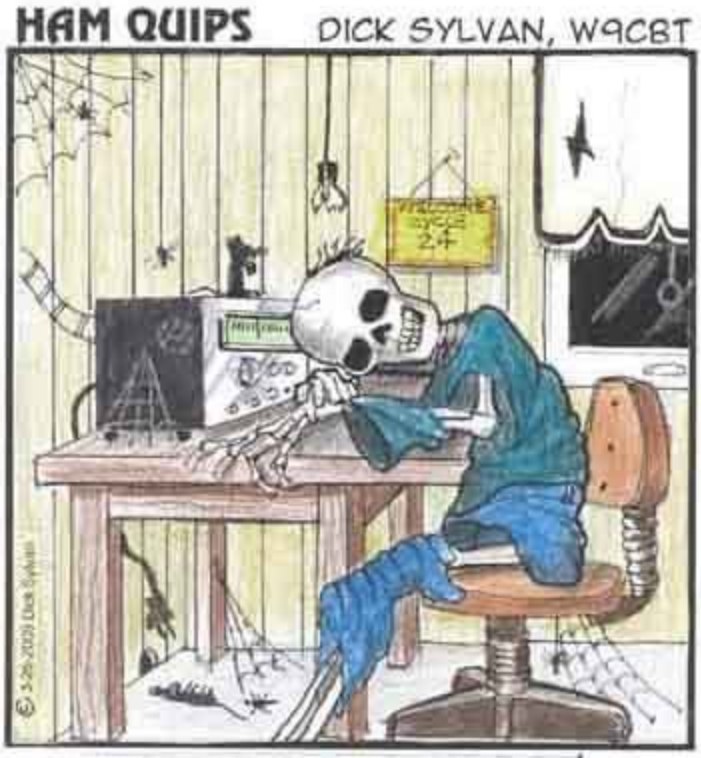
5. THE NAQCC ELMER PROJECT - FROM K5DUZ and N3IJR: -

The Elmer project is completely co-ordinated by Ron and Karl. If you are interested in helping out or need help with any CW and/or QRP matters contact:
K5DUZ - **NAQCCSKED@FLASH.NET**
N3IJR - pix, email, n3ijr (1K)

The NAQCC QRS Net convenes each Monday at 0130Z when Standard time is in effect and 0030Z during Daylight savings time (Sunday evening at 8:30PM here in the USA Eastern time zone) on 7122.5 kHz from April through October and 3575.0 kHz from November through March. Everyone is invited to check in for some hands-on CW teaching and learning. QRO is permitted for this one NAQCC activity since learning CW is so important and it may be difficult for newcomers to copy weaker signals amidst QRM or QRN. NCS (Net Control Station) is Karl using the club call of N3AQC.

Also see Elmer Project on the web site for much more info of help to those needing it.

6. CW CARTOON OF THE MONTH: Let's take a comedy and/or nostalgia break now courtesy of Dick Sylvan W9CBT. Dick has been a long-time QRP/CW operator. One of his many talents is being a cartoon artist, and he is supplying a cartoon each month for the newsletter. The NAQCC is very honored to be one of just two organizations to feature Dick's cartoons. In addition to our newsletter, Dick's cartoons appear monthly in The K9YA Telegraph, an on-line only Ham Radio E-zine where he is the staff cartoonist. Dick has also authored a book entitled "Hi Hi - A Collection of Ham Radio Cartoons" available via his web site. A new cartoon will be appearing in each of our even-numbered newsletters.



QRP QRP

7. MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: This section is managed by Paul N8XMS and any questions about it should go to PAUL142857@GMAIL.COM. Paul selects members at random and asks them if they would like to be featured in the Member Spotlight in the newsletter.

Bernie Miller N7YY #0336

I started Ham Radio in 1968. I couldn't find anyone that wanted to buddy up and learn code so

I found the package of ARRL manuals and maps in the local Electronics store and memorized 5 characters each day. After I had the code down pat, I found a 33 1/3 record that I wore out trying to get fast enough to take the Novice test. I found a Ham that would give me the test and I passed it and waited forever (I believe it was a little over two months) for my license to come in the mail. After a couple of months I had my code speed up to where I could go the FCC office and take the General test which I also passed. I was a general for a number of years until I retired and moved back to Montana where I took the Advanced and Extra class tests. Of all the tickets, the Novice was the most fun. I was on the radio every free moment I had. Antenna wasn't very high and I only had a couple of crystals for each band. It didn't take long for me to get my code speed up but I could never seem to hear anything on 10 meters and couldn't figure out why.

Since returning to Montana after retiring from the Navy and Shipyards, I joined a Radio Club and got involved in the field days, awards, volunteer testing, satellites, digital modes, computers and finally QRP. I still do everything but always seem to find more time for CW QRP. I am fascinated with what you can do with 5 watts or less. I have an interest in building a little QRP transceiver some day. With the Internet you can just about find anything and I am sure I can find a schematic for a wintertime project. Summertime here is for Fly Fishing and going out in the hills and mountains.

I have never tired of Ham Radio and always seem to learn something new. There is always a new idea floating around and most of the time its fun to try it out. Ham Radio is something like fishing in the Ocean; you never know who or what your going to catch. I have sure enjoyed the Hobby and the people in it.

Bernie - N7YY
NAQCC #0336

8. NEWS ITEMS AND ARTICLES BY OUR MEMBERS: This section is a forum for you to tell other members what you've been up to on the ham bands or to submit an article dealing with some aspect of CW and hc019 QRP operation or equipment. Send your news items and articles to our news editor Paul KD2MX at **KD2MX@ARRL.NET**. For your convenience any links in this section will open in a new browser window so you can come immediately back here to the newsletter just by closing that extra window.

(disclaimer) Any views expressed here are those of the member submitting them, and may not be in agreement with those of the NAQCC.

- **From Tom WY3H #0001** - (Tom gave me this item from Ripley's Believe It or Not cartoon in our newspaper - K3WWP) "Legally blind and unable to use his hands, Josh LaRue of New Concord, Ohio, USA, wrote a book by tapping out the words in Morse code using his tongue!"

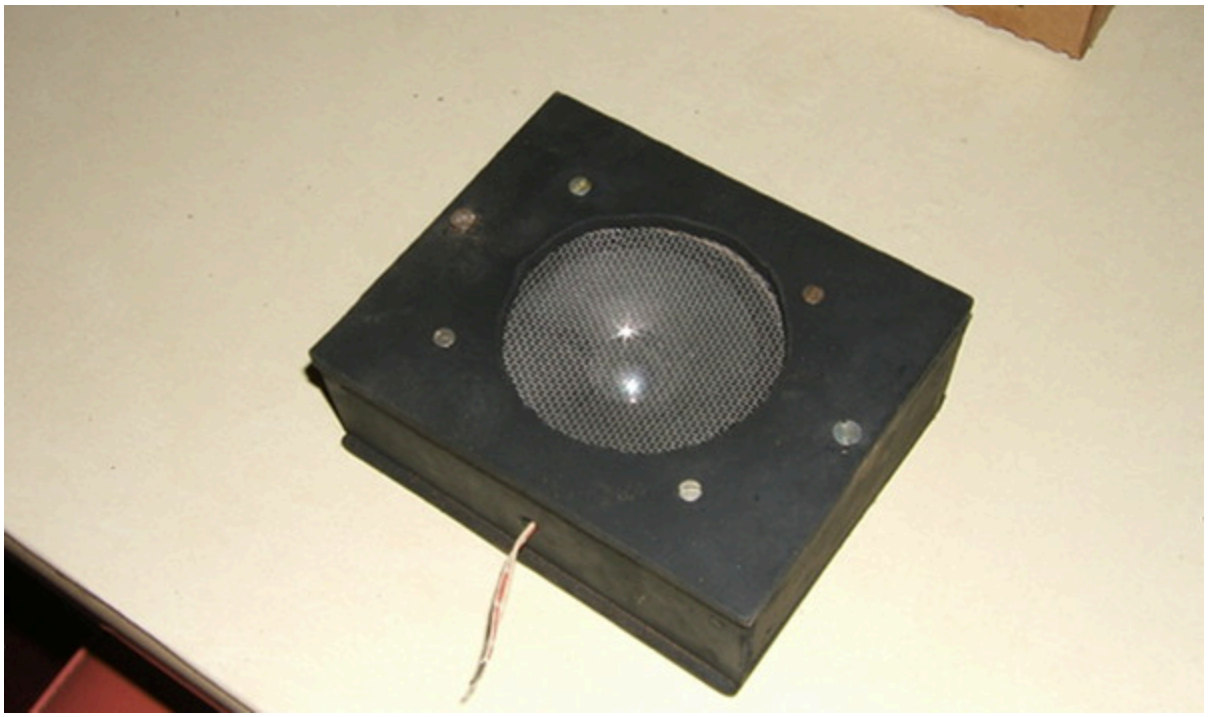
- **From John K3WWP #0002** - Referring to Tom's submission above - And "everyone" thinks Morse code is an anachronism with no practical use in this day and age. Well, it certainly isn't as that article and many others prove.

Mike KC2EGL and I recently engaged in another construction project. Mike wanted a small external speaker to use with his KX-1 that we built about a year ago. He wanted to make it a homebrew project. I told him I definitely had enough parts in my 'junk box' in the basement. We tested out a few of the speakers I had to find which one sounded good with the KX-1. We decided on one which I believe was a mid-range speaker I took from an old 'hi-fi' speaker along with a woofer and tweeter a few years ago.

With the speaker found, we next needed to build an enclosure for it. I had several small pieces of masonite which could be used for a front, back and sides after appropriate trimming to size. I also had a couple short pieces of wood that we could use to fasten the masonite pieces together into a box. We did that and came up with this as shown in the midst of being spray painted a dull black.

That was as far as we got back in our February get-together because as usual we also did a lot of other things in that session. Mike came back on March 9 and among a ton of other things (see the diary on my web site for a journal of our busy day), we finished and tested the speaker.

In the second picture above you can see the speaker itself and the brackets we were going to use to mount it. After Mike applied a couple more coats of paint to the box, we began the final assembly. An old piece of window screen fastened between the speaker and the front cover served as a speaker grille. We fastened the front cover to the rest of the box and took it up to my shack to try it out. Here's a look at the final product.



The object in back of the speaker is a pizza box, a common sight at our sessions when we don't raid Ponderosa or a similar establishment.

When I suggested that we should have countersunk the screws, Mike said it looks more like a homebrew project as is. I guess that's true. Anyway performance is more important than looks. When we hooked it up to the TS-480, it sounded great. I thought it sounded even better than the speaker that came with the 480. We got the same results from the KX-1 when we tried it next.

I think it demonstrates again that simplicity works well in ham radio. We didn't do any calculating to figure the volume of the box to give the best sound. We didn't put any cotton batting in the box as is done in many commercial speakers. We just threw together a bunch of parts and came up with a very good item that Mike will get a great deal of use out of with his KX-1. And it beats paying the high price of an Elecraft speaker to match the KX-1. Ours cost all of $0.00.

I hope that inspires you to build something. You don't need to put out a lot of bucks, nor follow some elaborate plans. A simple raid of a fairly well-stocked junk box, a little common sense, and a little bit of time can lead to something useful you'll be proud of.

- **From Rick W3BI #4061 -** One reason why I don't use it (IE) is the hackers don't seem to bother with Chrome as much. Chrome is faster when loading and searching and you can type your search string right in the URL box. The down side is my scenario below.

When I tried to download and install GenLog v7.0, the cursor wouldn't turn to a "hand" and I could not download.

So I went to v7.4 and found that I must have the cursor on the "gen" part of the hyperlink and was then able to download that file (gen325upd.exe). I made a new file for GenLog and unzipped the .exe into it and tried to run it that way and got this error:

Runtime error 339 THREED32.ocx not correctly registered: file is missing or invalid.

I then tried using IE8 and everything worked perfectly. The program ran and installed. So if you have a problem using Chrome, you might want to try another browser.

- **From Terry KE5YUM #3102 -** QRP is alive and well in Oklahoma and north Texas. Santa brought me a MFJ-9030 for Christmas, and I have been enjoying working as many operators as I can in the late afternoon, including a call to FM5LD and 6Y5WJ. My 40 meter rig hums right along, and I've added a Genesis G5-20 transmitter to the mix. I hopefully will have that on the air soon. One of the most satisfying QSOs I've had on 40 meters was with K3TIM in Virginia. He was running 250mw from a Tuna Tin 2.

I may have a new member for the club soon. My 78-year-old dad is interested in getting a ham license, a QRP rig, and learning CW. I've shared with him that for very little money, he can be on the air with the loan of a few pieces of equipment from me. I've directed him to the NAQCC website, and he finds it very helpful.

I've been thinking about something, and I wanted to ask the membership. Is anyone running mobile CW QRP? It may be a pipe dream but any thoughts on that subject would be appreciated.

- **From Don K3RLL #1905 -** For what it is worth I totally agree with the editorial comments in Newsletter #113 on the 40 meter digital bullies pushing QRP off what was once by "gentleman's agreement" our calling frequencies. I'm sure you've been reading the same internet reflector chatter about how a lot of us have moved up to the Novice band to avoid it. It isn't right to run, however, and I applaud you for taking a public stand for NAQCC and just broadening the frequency range for our Sprints. I know I am not the only one who has been stewing over the digital stations moving down from 7.070 to follow the lead of the RTTY lids who never listen before cranking up their KW carriers on top of QRP QSOs.

- **From Dennis K3NVI #0094** - This was received from Ben WN4QIB in 1970 and is still pertinent today. The original author is unknown.

THE WORLD IS MINE

I AM AN AMATEUR RADIO OPERATOR, THE WORLD IS MINE.

I AM UNFETTERED BY CHAINS, WALLS, AND DISTANCE. I AM ON A FIRST NAME BASIS WITH THE VERY YOUNG AND THE VERY OLD; WITH THE FIRM AND THE INFIRM.

I AM NEVER ALONE.

NO MAGICIAN, NO FABLED SEER OR POTENTATE EVER ENJOYED SUCH AWESOME POWER. WITH THE CLICK OF A SWITCH AND THE TURN OF A KNOB, MY GENIE MATERIALIZES TO AWAIT MY PLEASURE. IN A TRICE MY WONDEFUL WORLD UNFOLDS BEFORE ME!

I AM CHARGED WITH A MANDATE OF PATIENCE, KINDNESS, AND UNDERSTANDING. THIS PRICELESS LEGACY IS MINE TO BRIGHTEN - OR TO TARNISH - AND I AM ONLY HUMAN.

I AM AWED BY IT ALL. WITH THE SPEED OF LIGHT ACROSS BOUNDLESS, DESOLATE SPACE, DOTS AND DASHES EXPLODE INTO LILTING LAUGHTER IN MY ROOM. MY BODY TINGLES. MY HAND FALTERS.

THE LOGIC OF IT ALL I UNDERSTAND, BUT THE MIRACLE REMAINS UNFATHOMED. YEARS ENHANCE, BUT NEVER JADE. THE WINE AGES AND BECOMES MORE POTENT. THIS IS MY VERY OWN, NEVER FADING, MAGIC LAMP. I STAND IN HUMBLE REVERENCE BEFORE MY GOD WHO MADE IT ALL POSSIBLE.

THIS IS A STATEMENT OF TRUTH: THE WORLD IS MINE!!

The publication of our next newsletter will be announced via email to all members for whom we have a valid email address unless they specifically have unsubscribed from the email.

Unless otherwise credited, all items are written by K3WWP.

If you came directly to this newsletter, we invite you now to browse the NAQCC Web Site.